

circumspect policy we must guarantee our position amidst the questions which preoccupy Europe. The Republic desires nothing but peace, peace accompanied by the dignity which a nation like ours demands, peace assured by a solid army of defence." The same *Leitmotif* was heard after the general election in the autumn. The first duty of the new Chamber, it was explained, was to strengthen the army. So powerful was the reaction that a demand for the total evacuation of Tonkin was only defeated by four votes. When Freycinet succeeded in his programme at the opening of 1886 his programme was fixed in advance. "If there is one point on which the ballot-boxes have expressed themselves without ambiguity/'ran the Ministerial declaration, "it is on the direction to be followed in foreign affairs. It is understood that France is to have a policy of dignity and peace, and that her forces are to be concentrated on the Continent, respected by all and menacing none. France desires no more of these distant expeditions, which are a source of sacrifice without any obvious compensation."

The foreign policy of the Third Republic was dominated by the two ideals of the recovery of the Rhine provinces and the foundation of an empire. For the first two decades it seemed impossible to pursue them simultaneously, and it was equally impossible to secure colonies without the assent of Berlin. The first act ended when Gambetta and Grevy, Waddington and Ferry postponed the *revanche* to the Greek Kalends and acted on the suggestion to take Tunis. The second act ended with the reverse in Indo-China, and the temporary abandonment of colonial expansion carried with it the termination of the *detente*. The obvious tasks before France in her new mood were to strengthen her army and to seek for allies.

The history of French policy during the decade following the fall of Ferry is the record of her successful pursuit of these objects.

Freycinet, who belonged to the school of Gambetta and Ferry, desired to continue the friendly relations with Berlin; but he showed less than his usual insight in choosing a Minister of War whose sinister activities were to bring France and Germany to the verge of war and to threaten the existence of the Republic. At this time, however, Boulanger was the *protege* of Clemehceau and the Radicals, and no one could foresee coming events. He had seen service in Algeria, Italy, Indo-China and the war of 1870, and had served as Director of Infantry at the War Office and commander of the army in